
Lesson Three: Water, Water, Everywhere



Objectives

Students will be able to:

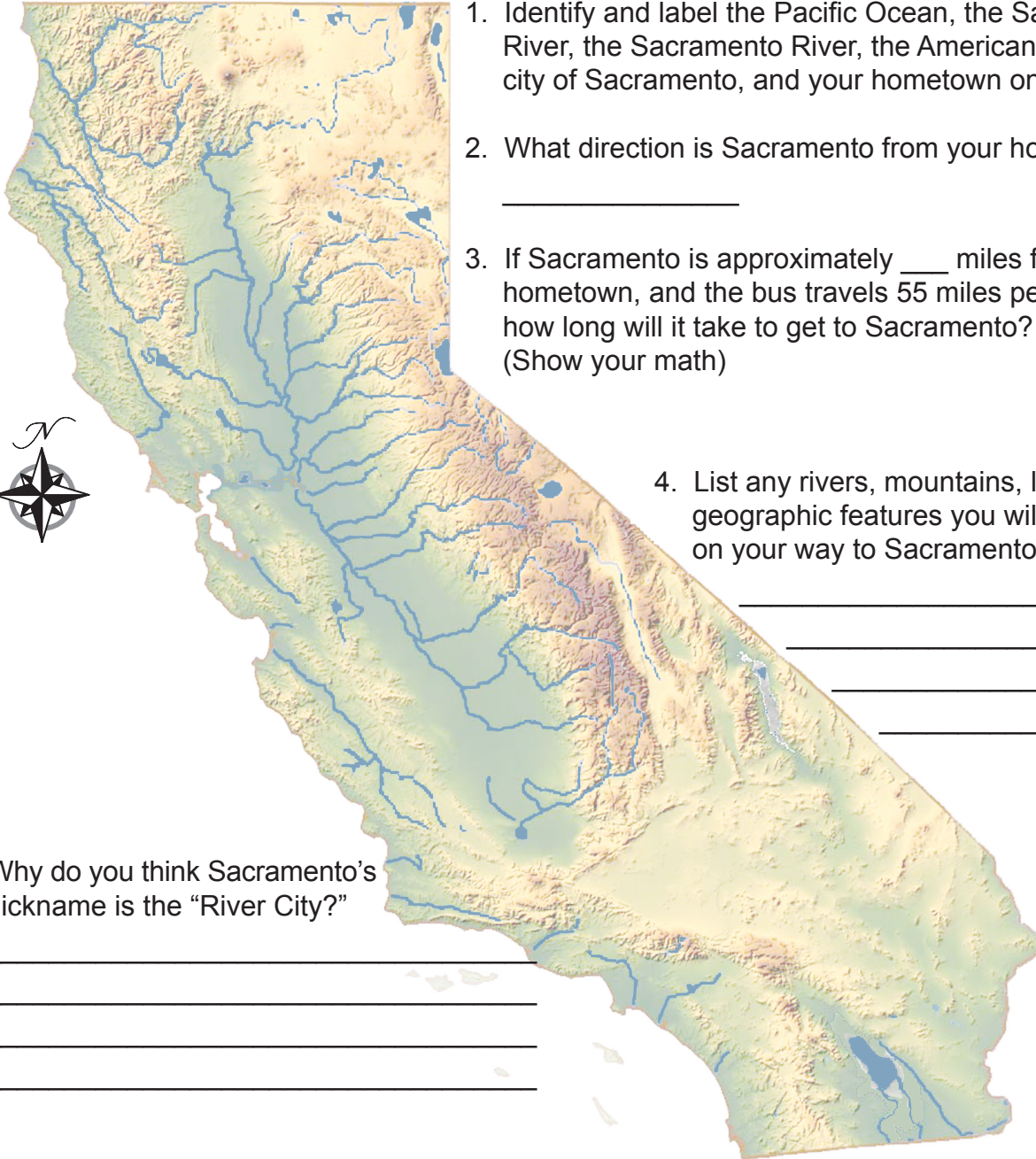
- Locate and identify the Pacific Ocean, San Joaquin River, American River and Sacramento River on a California map
- Locate and identify Sacramento and student's hometown on a California map
- Identify ways of building a house in order to avoid possible flood damage
- Explain the role of the Sacramento River in the development of the city of Sacramento

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Sacramento on the Map

Directions: Use the map on this page or a map your teacher provides to complete the activities and questions below.



1. Identify and label the Pacific Ocean, the San Joaquin River, the Sacramento River, the American River, the city of Sacramento, and your hometown on the map.

2. What direction is Sacramento from your hometown?

3. If Sacramento is approximately ____ miles from your hometown, and the bus travels 55 miles per hour, how long will it take to get to Sacramento?
(Show your math)

4. List any rivers, mountains, lakes, or other geographic features you will pass or cross on your way to Sacramento.

5. Why do you think Sacramento's nickname is the "River City?"

6. What geographical features do you think led to Sacramento becoming the state capital?

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Sacramento Underwater

*Directions: Read the information below and answer the questions that follow.
Write answers in complete sentences.*

California's longest and widest river is the mighty Sacramento River. Three hundred twenty miles long, the Sacramento River flows from springs near Mount Shasta through the delta region southwest of Sacramento to San Francisco Bay.

This large river was important to the development of Sacramento. When John Sutter came to this region he built his settlement, New Helvetia (today known as Sutter's Fort), on a small hill east of where the Sacramento and American Rivers join. John Sutter recognized the importance of the Sacramento River to the development of the area, as well as its potential to flood.

As miners poured into the Sacramento Valley and the Sierra Nevada during the gold rush, merchants established their businesses along the Sacramento River waterfront to supply the arriving miners.

However, disaster struck in January 1850. Both the Sacramento and American Rivers overflowed so fast there was little time for people to escape the floodwaters. People quickly rebuilt Sacramento but it washed away again in March 1850. To prevent more flooding in Sacramento, miles of levees were built along the Sacramento River. Another major flood in 1862 washed over the levees and flooded Sacramento. This time the people of Sacramento decided to take action. While rebuilding the damaged levees, they brought wagonloads of dirt and gravel into the city and dumped it on the streets. The street levels in the business district were raised between 10 and 12 feet. Whole buildings were raised to the new street level and new sidewalks built. Local newspapers reported that Sacramento was literally a city on stilts.



View of Sacramento City during the great flood of January 1850.

Due to Sacramento's history of flooding, for many of the city's mansions, like the Governor's Mansion, small hills were built around a raised basement to ensure the first floor would not flood. Today a series of levees, dams, and weirs attempt to hold back the Sacramento River. However, if one of those levees or dams breaks, Sacramento will once again flood, and the state's water supply will be seriously affected.

1. How long is the Sacramento River? _____
2. What two other major California rivers flow into the Sacramento River?

3. Why was the Sacramento River important to the development of the city of Sacramento?

4. What are three steps Sacramento leaders took to reduce the threat of flooding in the late 1800s?

5. What did the Gallatins do to protect their new mansion from flooding?

6. Could Sacramento still flood today?

7. What can we do today to protect our homes against floods?

Directions: Imagine you are Albert Gallatin, a partner in a thriving hardware store or his wife Clemenza. You want to build a mansion in Sacramento so that you are close to your business and friends, but you have a major concern. The Sacramento River has flooded the city several times and caused much damage. Write a letter to your architect, Nathaniel Goodell, and tell him where and how to build the mansion so it does not get flooded and destroyed.

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